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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/810,593	03/29/2004	Robert M. Palmer	A894639US	9736
49127	7590	10/05/2005		
HICKS & PENMAN LTD. 3553 31ST STREET NW SUITE 123 CALGARY, AB T2L2K7 CANADA			EXAMINER HRUSKOCI, PETER A	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1724	

DATE MAILED: 10/05/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/810,593

Applicant(s)

PALMER, ROBERT M.

Examiner

Peter A. Hruskoci

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 July 2004 and 11 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 8-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-7, drawn to a method, classified in class 210, subclass 738.
- II. Claims 8-20, drawn to an apparatus or system, classified in class 210, subclass 104.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the apparatus or system as claimed can be used in a materially different method such as metal recovery method.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification and recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Andrew R. Hicks on 9/20/05 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group II, claims 8-20. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 1-7 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: In the specification on page 10 "Polyacrylimide" appears to be erroneous, and should be changed to – Polyacrylamide -; and on page 12 "overflow 140" appears to be misdescriptive because Figure 1 shows an inflow through pipe 140.

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Appropriate correction is required.

Claim 11 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. It appears that the conical mass of agglomerated solids recited in claim 11 is recited in claim 8.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 10 "said means inlet" lacks clear antecedent basis.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 8-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Cuvillier et al. 4,048,069. It is submitted that Cuvillier et al. disclose (see col. 2 line 28 through col. 4 line 41) the structure of the apparatus as recited in the instant claims.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cuvillier et al. as above, and further in view of Eis 3,523,889. The claims differ from the apparatus or system of Cuvillier et al. as applied above, by reciting that the system includes a specific agglomeration means and sensor means. Eis disclose (see col. 4 line 46 through col. 6 line 39)

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that it is known in the art to utilize a settling tank with polyacrylamide settling aid feed line to aid in agglomerating suspended solids, and a photo-electric cell or sensor for controlling the discharge of underflow from the settling tank. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the system of Cuvillier et al. by including the recited agglomeration means and sensor means in view of the teachings of Eis, to aid in agglomerating suspended solids and discharging agglomerated solids.


The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter A. Hruskoci whose telephone number is (571) 272-1160. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 6:30AM-4:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Duane Smith can be reached on (571) 272-1166. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Peter A. Hruskoci
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724

9/30/05